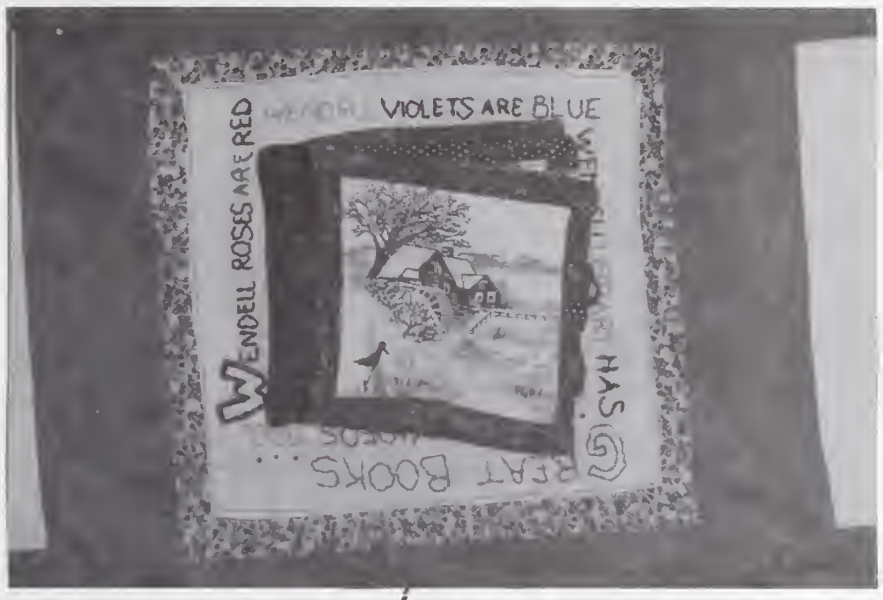
WENDELL POST



Vol. XI No. 3 Aug./Sept. 1988 50¢

Farm Animals Welfare Bill Questioned

A bill protecting the welfare of farm animals is being put before the voters in a referendum on the November ballot. Its premise is: it's worth considering whether the business of farming in Massachusetts might now and exploit farm animals, as in cases reported elsewhere involving veal calves, slaughterhouses, etc.

The bill calls on the Commissioner of Agriculture to promulgate regulations within one year, on livestock dehorning and castration, veal calf housing, treatment of chicks by hatcheries, and within two years on matters including proper bedding and flooring and space: transportation: slaughter: diet: and construction of new farm animal housing.

The bill has drawbacks worth considering Some came out in an interview with Peter Diemand, a determined opponent of the bill who manages and operates Diemand Egg Farm on Mormon Hollow Road with two of his sisters, Faith and Anne. Peter is a soft-spoken, gentle man not given to emotionalism or exaggeration. His farm is a 18,000-bird operation, smaller than the average (33,000 birds) in Massachusetts...and tiny compared to Midwest operations, which run as high as seven million birds.

"I feel the groups that are pushing this bill have no idea of what farming is all about", he said. "They're pretty much all city people. At a hearing April 7 before the Legislature, several legislators asked CEASE (Coalition to End Animal Suffering & Exploitation) members where these things were happening. Their reply I have not seen, but I know someone who has. A lot had never been on a farm.

Most of the horror stories the animal rights activists in office tell don't happen in Massachusetts. Probably because there are so few farms--only two percent of the population is in agriculture--inspectors can keep an eye on it.

"They picked Massachusetts because they feel it's the easiest state to carry because of the way people think. If it does go through, they're definitely going to go to the other states. Until it does, though, farmers in this state would be at a competitive disadvantage. They're really having a rough time. All it would take is a little while. One guy said it's too bad it wasn't a national thing that went through all at once."

According to the bill, when the regulations are written they will define"sufficient and appropriate flooring, bedding, space." Said Peter, "An ordinary person reading that thinks it sounds good. But you can't use cages if it were enforced to the letter. If they required birds to be on the floor, we couldn't do it and stay in business because of what it would do th our labor costs. There're also problems with freezing water and suffocating. Once when we had a floor operation, years ago, a fan blade broke and it was rapping. We came out in the morning and there were 1,500 dead birds. With floor birds, when they're frightened, they stampede into a corner and climb on top of each other to get away from the noise. The bottom ones suffocate.

cont' p. 8

Peace Walk '88

When they arrived in Wendell in 1985 some of them thought they reached the end of the rainbow. Let's make them feel welcome again. On Wednesday, August 17, 1988, the Peacewalkers will be coming through Wendell. In fact, they will be stopping to cool off at a local swimming hole, eat supper, be entertained by our own homespun talent, and to sleep. We are inviting all local citizens to meet and help feed the 50 people from Soviet Armenia, East and West Germany, Central America and all over Massachusetts. People are also invited to join the walk. They will be walking from Athol to Wendell on Wednesday and leaving Wendell for the Peace Pagoda on Thursday. The pot luck supper will be held at the Meetinghouse on Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Anyone wishing more information or to help feed and entertain this international group should call Sylvia Wetherby at 544-6146. The walk is being organized by the Cambridge Peace Exchange, the Boston Area Children of War Group, the Cambridge Peace Commission and the Peace Pagoda at Leverett.

Sylvia Wetherby

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Jackie Ricketts
The "Go Get 'em" Lady

It is cool and semi-dark in the Town Hall The tables are set with white paper tablecloths. Small vases of wildflowers - blue - pinks - reds are pinpoints from where I stand in the foyer. The rich browns of the dull oiled floor makes this waiting somehow more comfortable. The sun just outside the thumbtacked foor of the Hall is bearing down sweltering. I wait. There are a hundred and fifty people in Millers right now that will be here shortly. Annie is on her way with the chicken and the coffee is perking. I can hear the hum of a computer in the backgroung...suddenly it is still. Here in the Wendell Town Hall is a connection. The connection. Almost 22 years ago for me. The connection with every year since and before.

She was an uncommon woman with the grace of the common reasonableness of country people. Stubborn, stronger in her determination than her good natured, and at times, vinegary humor let us know. She was a caregiver without the labels...without the drumrolls...And, I stand here now remembering Jackie. There is a breeze.. the paper-white against the tables makes me squint as I turn to catch the past. She is there cajoling voters in 1967. Year after year, handing you your precious ballot. Checking and knowing and doing a tally...in her head. Knowing even before the last count how the issues would go. She was always good for a prediction.. and a joke. Professional with her town duties there was always a giggle and a quip.

She cared for her family and all the children in the neighborhood. Having Jackie help with Sarah in the early years, I knew I could count on early AM coffee, good humor and serious talk about what was going on in town. The issues, the politics, the happenings. She could feed and change an infant, administer justice to the three and five year olds and at the same time never skip a beat about the town...She pushed me to run for office--after she had canvased 100 voters and after she and a friend had had "write-in" ballots printed. She was not easy to put off...on that occasion said no to deaf ears and went on to learn how to be a moderator for 12 years...I remember cold mornings when she would run to the car,

cont' p.5

Vol. XI No. 3

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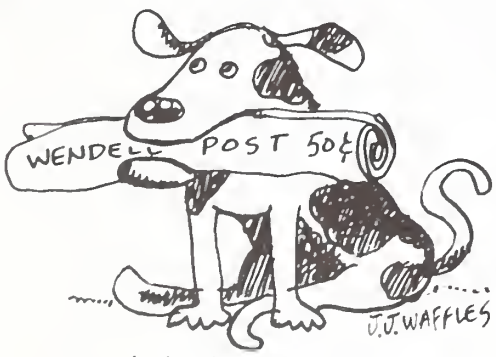

Help! The Post

The Post has an opening for the job of distribution. It works like this: every other month, as soon as the Post is printed, the distribution person brings the paper to the news outlets, where it is eagerly awaited by our readers. (It's definitely the glory job). You collect receipts, keep records, resupply when papers have been sold out. You get out into the community, and you become part of a team that's not as exciting, perhaps, as the Channel 8 news team, but that's just as dedicated.

If you'd like to help with a Post, a small volunteer enterprise dedicated to Wendell, call Anne Diemand at 544-6111 or Kathy Becker at 544-2086.

Who Done It?

There was an pamphlet submitted to the Wendell Post this issue. The layout staff does not know who submitted it. There are many points in the article which we have questions about because we believe them not to be true. Therefore at the layout we decided not to print it until we can discuss the issue with whomever in town submitted it. Please contact us so we can come up with an article that is okayed by the Wendell Post Staff.

To: Wendell Taxpayers

In response to the concern about the proposed 1989 Budget, we have prepared the following information. While this report does not solve the increased burden we all are experiencing from our Real Estate Taxes, it doew show that the per person cost of running Town Government is less than we experienced ten years ago.

There are two major reasons that Wendell Taxpayers are getting larger tax bills.

(Reason #1) When the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial court ordered all towns to value property at fair market value, the tax load in Wendell changed overnight from Personal Property Tax to residential Real Estate Tax. In 1977 thsese two levies were at a one-to-one ratio. In 1978 the Real Estate levy was ten (10) times the Personal Property Tax. In Fiscal 1988 the ratio is 20-1.

(Reason #2) Our tax levy is paying a radically higher percentage of our budget costs than state aid and other sources of revenue. The average tax levy share of the budget FY 75, 76, 77, was 38%, in FY 87, 88, 89 it is 53% and the trend is upward.
Contributing to the decrease in other sources of revenue, are eliminating of Revenue Sharing (U.S. government), decreases in payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (MA for state forest land), flat funding for Chapter 90 monies (state aid for highway construction), and an increased requirement that the schools fund their budgets through competitive grants.

In actual dollars or dollars adjusted for inflation, our budgets have been increasing over the last several years. We think that the program administered by the Town and mandated by the voters is more than adequate justification for these increases.

However, a careful look at the numbers shows that even this expanded program is being delivered far more ecomomically than in the past. If the dollars are adjusted for inflation the average budget FY 87, 88, 89 is $771,858.00, and in FY 75, 76, 77 it was 952,158.00. Even though our tax dollars pay more of our budget, the per capita tax levy is actually smaller than in the past. Adjusted for inflation, the average per person tax bill FY 87, 88, 89 is $493. The average for the previous 12 years was $542!

The Annual Budget is created by a deliberate process of hearings and consultations with all Town Department, beginning in November of each year. The efficiency of that process is reflected in the budget that went to this year's Town Meeting, and was approved overwhelmingly at that meeting.

We are always open to suggestions for increasing efficiency and for saving the Town money. An effort has been made to be sure that input from the citizen taxpayers, who have been meeting on this matter, had been included along with distribution of this information and at the Informational Meeting scheduled for August 11th.

In response to suggestions from several people, we offer the following proposal:

To facilitate the use of volunteers for Town projects, an auxiliary or village association should be formed. It should be organized well enough to keep track of the skills and availabilities of a pool of volunteers. Any Town Department could contact this group and readily be able to find out whether volunteers could effectively contribute to a planned project.

This proposal, if implemented would overcome the major obstacle of finding time to solicit and organize volunteers. Whether this would help with our budget or not, it would enhance the spirit of cooperation.

It is a sense of cooperation among Wendell Town government that has made careful budgets possible. We look forward to your cooperation and support in making them workable.

Sincerely

WENDELL SELECTBOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ted Lewis, Daniel Keller
Jim Slavas, Stephen Broll
Michael Idoine, Ed Boland
William Golding

Matt D. Stamell
Luthier
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Budget Problems

In trimming a personal budget we must ask ourselves a question. Is it something we really NEED or is it something we WANT? Why not apply the same principle to our town budget?

If only the people who are aroused now had attended the annual town meeting, many of these expenditures being questioned would have been voted down. That was the time we should have decided if it was really NEED or just a WANT. It is unfortunate that our Board of Selectmen and the Finance Board have come under such harsh criticism. These individuals have spent many long hours and have tried to do their best but apparently they did not carefully weigh NEED versus WANT and advise us accordingly. However, THEY did not vote these articles in. WE did and we did it because so many of us could not be bothered to spend a couple of nights paying attention to how our money was being spent.

It is a sad situation when only seventy-five people attend an annual town meeting and the registered voters number five hundred. It's true that these meetings often drag on and on, but there seems to be no other way if we are to continue our present form of town government. (Dear Reader... If you are over fifty, when was the last time you came to a town meeting? Are you one of the ones that say the town is being taken over by the younger people many of whom are newcomers? Well, we have nobody but ourselves to blame!)

Next year let's have a PRE-TOWN MEETING to find out what the TOTAL proposed budget is, what the individual expenses are, and what they are for. Let's try to have this meeting well attended so that we can vote wisely at the annual town meeting. Also, let us have a telephone tree to inform voters of Special Town Meetings. Notices posted here and there are not seen by the majority of people.

It would be interesting to know just how many registered voters are landowners and pay the Town of Wendell a Real Estate Tax. Can someone find out and tell us?

Elsie G. Diemand

Wrong Year For Restraint

To the Editor:

The Prop 2½ Override issue is a hard one to get a handle on. Most folks have been going back and forth on it, leaning first toward and then away: the arguments are good on both sides. On the one hand, taxes going up so much hurt everybody who has to pay the bigger bite: on the other hand, the biggest chunk of the raise is going to our schools, and how can we tell our kids "We want you to get a good education but we don't want to pay for it"?

This confusion and two-mindedness showed up right away at Town Meeting. The discussion was long and there were a lot ot ques-,

cont' p.12

Wendell Barn Fire

It has been a summer of lightning storms, some of them fierce enough to crack the sky like an egg. The conditions have been just right for them: a heat pump from the Gulf of Mexico clashing with cold fronts straight from the polar cap. They have come and gone and come again for more than two months now, and if you are like me you feared them each time.

And with reason. Just ask Bill Golding.

At about quarter of eight on Wednesday, June 22, a bolt of lightning hit his tv antenna, zipped down the wire, and blew out the back of the tv set, frying it and the computer game attached to it. In what was presumably the resultant power surge, a microwave melted, a bug light turned molten, two more tv sets blew up, and all hell, it must have seemed, had broken loose.

While Bill was dealing with all this, 10-year-old Amy happened to look out the front door. "Daddy!" she yelled. "The barn's on fire!"

Indeed it was. Lightning had hit the weathervane on the barn. Bill was starting to feel, as he later said, that all this was "just like being in a war zone." But he has been a police officer in Orange for 15 years now--and Acting Chief for 4-- and he has been trained to handle emergencies, even if they are "like war zones". So, reacting as he knew he must, he did what he had to do: he raced for the fire extinguisher, but--"it wouldn't reach. It was a small fire then but it was way up at the top of the barn and the extinguisher just didn't have enough power to reach it.

The next step was to get the horses out of the barn. Neighbors had by this time started to gather, and some of them helped with the horses and whatever else they could drag or carry. When he was sure everyone was safe and as much as could be done, Bill raced--soaking wet and covered with soot and dirt-- to the store: "All our power was out and the phone was dead too." It was now about eight o'clock. From the store, he called the Fire Phone. Chief Ricketts and Deputy Chief Williston each picked up their red phones at the same time, and Bill told them the story. They said they'd be right there, and Bill went back to the house to wait for them.

And therein lie the confusion and hard feelings that followed.

At about five past eight, Bill's wife noticed that the phone was working again, and Bill, wondering where the Wendell Fire Department was, called Orange. He knew, he says, that "the barn was gone, there was nothing that could save it by then", but the wind, he thought, was shifting and he was worried now about the house.

Orange, in turn, called Wendell. The fire departments in New Salem and Miller's Falls heard the call and came to help. All three--Wendell, New Salem, and Miller's Falls--arrived at about the same time: 8:25 pm.

Once there, the job they did was, as Bill Golding tells it, exemplary. I can't say enough good about the way they handled it when they were here," he said. "My point is it shouldn't have taken them so long."

Why did it take so long?

What Bill Golding didn't know at the time came out somewhat later: he as a victim of extraordinary circumstances.

Upset by the delay that may have cost him his barn, he wrote a letter to the Selectboard demanding that they look into this with an eye toward correcting whatever mistaken process allowed the delay. In response, the Selectboard held a hearing to investigate the circumstances, and then sent a letter to Golding detailing their findings.

What they found was this: Chief Ricketts, in a difficult and painful situation while caring for his then-ailing wife, had more or less moved Deputy Chief Williston to the position of primary response. Unfortunately, virtually the moment Williston put down the fire phone, a very serious situation arose which demanded his attention and prevented him from responding.

It was a situation Selectman Michael Idione characterized as "very serious" and "extraordinary, not likely ever to happen again". As a result, the Selectboard felt that "no organizational" changes or adjustments were required, and they said so in their letter to Golding. Idoine stressed that if Mr. Golding is still not satisfied, or wants more information about their decision, the Board is certainly open to him and Mr. Golding is invited to attend any meeting with his concerns. He said that the Selectboard had not heard from Mr. Golding after their letter was sent, but that they were still willing to discuss it.

And there the matter rests. Bill's barn is gone--bulldozed and buried--and the family is still catching itself looking for things they can't find because "o yeah, that was in the barn too." The barn was not insured, and the money to replace it will have to come out of pocket. The winter's hay for the horses will have to be replaced. All told, Bill thinks that the fire will cost him upwards of 15,000 or 20,000. It was a very expensive night, and money is only the beginning.

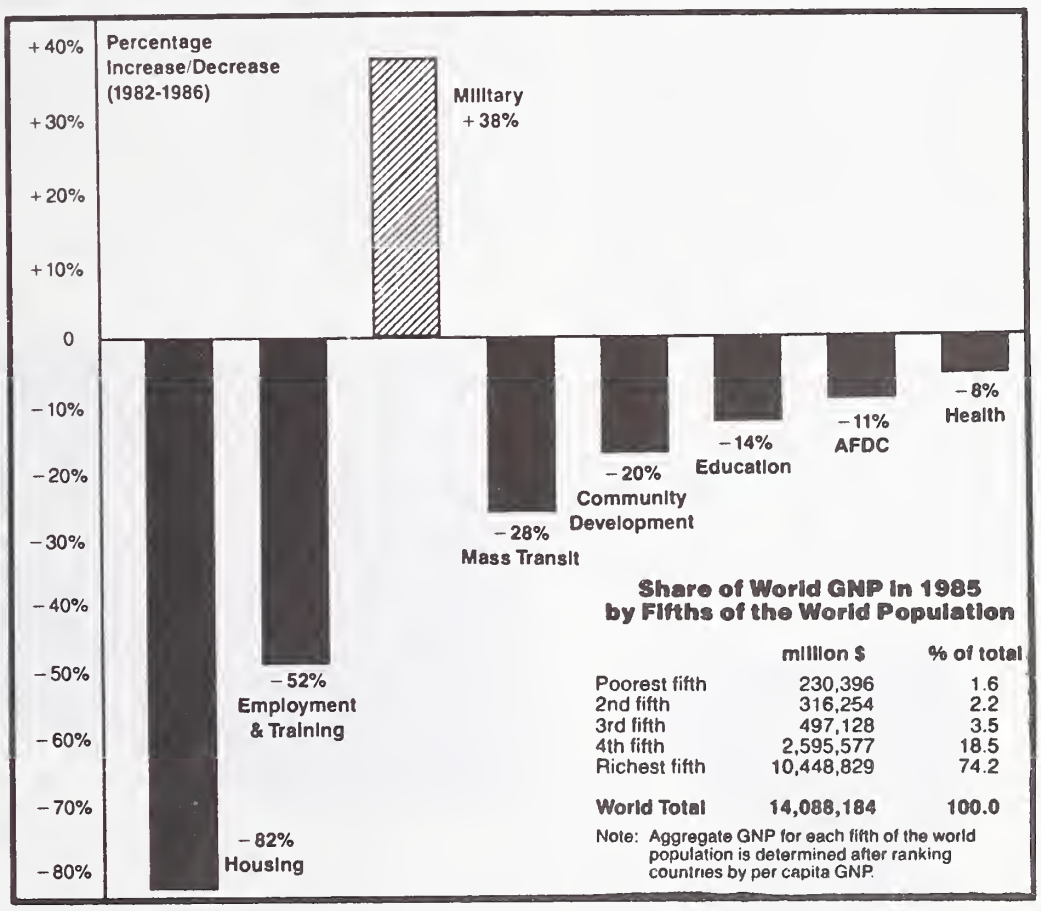
But there was good that came of all this as well. During the fire and in its aftermath, the neighborhood pulled together. "It was just wonderful." Bill said. "Everybody offered to do whatever they could, and without the help we got we couldn't have saved as much as we did."

He shook his head, marveling as he remembered: "You know, we had to spend the night in Orange. While we were gone somebody fed the horses! They just brought the hay over and fed them. They didn't ask for any money. In fact, we still don't know who did it..."

And that is what those of us who live here would like to think Wendell is all about.

michael mcphee

Federal Spending From '82-'86



Share of World GNP in 1985 by Fifths of the World Population

	million $	% of total
Poorest fifth	230,396	1.6
2nd fifth	316,254	2.2
3rd fifth	497,128	3.5
4th fifth	2,595,577	18.5
Richest fifth	10,448,829	74.2
World Total	**14,088,184**	**100.0**

Note: Aggregate GNP for each fifth of the world population is determined after ranking countries by per capita GNP.

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Sun 9-4 Mon 2-8
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JUDITH WILDER

Land Transfers

5/12/88 Beretsky, Stanley to Roper, Robert L. Locke Hill Road.
5/06/88 Coombs, Allyn W. & Joan G. to Frank, Kenneth A. & Diantha M., New Salem Road.
5/05/88 Vally Land Fund, Inc. Thru MDC to Commonwealth of Mass., Old Shutesbury Road
5/06/88 Gardner, Gary M. to Richard, Kenneth E., Rush Road.

Police Log

6/27/88 One car accident on Locke Hill Road No injuries
6/28/88 Break at LaClare's trailer New Salem - items recovered
7/01/88 McCloud Mormon on Mormon Hollow Rd. reported one saddle, one English bridle and two fishing poles
7/13/88 Deer hit and killed on Depot Rd.
7/13/88 Family dispute on Montague Rd. residence
7/19/88 Mike Carroll's cow reported out, damaged nearby garden
7/19/88 Melissa LaFreniere reported 3 bows and one fishing pole stolen

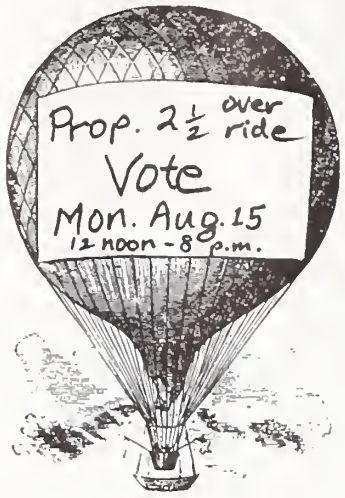
Ladies Aid

On Tuesday evening, June 28, nine members of the Wendell Ladies Aid met to discus and determine whether or not to sponsor the traditional Halloween and Christmas parties.

Several factors contribute to the decision reached. The number of volunteers to plan, staff, and clean up from the events is not sufficient to attempt planning the parties this year. Reasons named why volunteers have not joined in this effort were aired. Changes in community members and spirit, "working mother syndrome", and lack of interest were all suspect in the decline of enthusiasm for joining our group. Along with these outside conditions, the Ladies Aid has had vacancies in its officer positions for some time now. These vacancies add to the lack of unity and direction of the organization. Such factors affect the ability of the Ladies Aid to function as it has in the past.

The Ladies Aid has decided to hold off on committing itself to planning either the Halloween or Christmas party. Individuals and groups are encouraged to consider hosting the holiday festivities. The Ladies Aid is available to join together to co-operatively work with people interested in planning and giving a holiday party. The Ladies Aid will meet again in the fall.

Donna Huntington



Nature Camp '88

Nature Camp 1988 had another fun season of exploring, appreciating and playing in nature at the Wendell State Forest, Ruggles Pond. The camp was directed by Clare Green and Bruce Wilson.

Massage Practice Moves

Starting Sept. 13, therapeutic massage will be offered on Tuesdays at 235 W. River St. in Orange, also the La Petite Beauty Salon of Claire Chaisson.

Susan DunLany of Wendell, certified massage therapist, will no longer be doing massage in clients' homes, but will be doing half-hour and hour massage sessions every Tuesday at the Orange location. The treatments are for healthful relaxation as well as specific complaints such as backache, neck and shoulder stress, circulatory problems, injury and TMJ disorder.

Appointments can be made by calling Claire at 544-6512.

Susan DunLany

Tribute: Broadus Mitchell

There are individuals who add lustre to the town in which they live. As the years go by it is noted that they seek not material things but to enrich the world by giving of themselves. The world is no better as the result of the life of one whose only values are material ones. It is made better by those who give of themselves because they care.

Wendell was fortunate in having, in Broadus Mitchell, one who cared. In 1926, he was instrumental in providing a summer school at Bryn Mawr for many daughters of immigrants who were penniless and had no other chance. That he was dedicated to his students, understood their problems and gave them inspiration in life was obvious when one considers that when he was in his nineties they came across the country to visit him.

Until the last of his life in 1988 he contributed to historial publications. The Wendell Post published some of his short articles on historical events and quizzes as well as a charming story for children. He composed delightful stories for children just as he talked- extemporaneously, effortlessly- a talent resulting from his love for them. In fact, his facile mind could weave a story just as he sat at the table.

Among his finest books is his biography of Alexander Hamilton, on whom he was the country's foremost authority. He had the rare gift of making history come alive, of leaving in a student's mind not only dates and places but the personalities of the figures in history as he told of both their deeds and their misdeeds, of their failures and triumphs, and how they responded. To his students they seemed not like merely characters in history but like someone they might have known, with hopes and fears like their own.

Having traveled widely abroad he knew what a gem Wendell is and loved it dearly. Whenever the town had a problem that could possibly be solved by Boston's good offices he wrote a convincing letter, so worded that it brought out the best in our neighbors to the east. No effort was too great to make for the town he loved. And he found good in everyone, even those who are hard to love. He merely separated the faults from the good and loved the good.

His interests were as varied as his talents. He built his garage, a children's playhouse and other buildings and he and his son rebuilt the barn. He was as able with tools as with the pen. His gardens were always a success. And he put up birdhouses for the birds he loved. The Wendell woods and Wendell history were precious to him.

For fifty years of summers he was with us. We are all the richer for having known him and, "altho the warrior's sun has set, its light shall linger round us yet, bright, radiant, blessed."

Mrs. Louis R. Herrick

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Conservation Notes

On Thursday, July 28th, James Hoyt Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs paid a visit to Wendell, arriving soon after Bill Steinmetz and Herm Covey came from the Belchertown office of the Fisheries & Wildlife Division. The purpose of this meeting with local Wendell officials was to announce land acquisition by the Commonwealth in Wendell and elsewhere in western Mass. The State has taken title to the Schuler property, which was bought for conservation purposes by Mason Phelps. Eighteen acres in size, this parcel faces the Millers River, just east of the Railroad Bridge where it crosses from Wendell into Erving, as one travels easterly toward Boston.

As Hoyt explains it, monies ear-marked for land-acquisition will move through the pipe-line slowly, but will all eventually be expended for not other purpose. Meanwhile, all the proposed acquisitions are being assigned priority and will be bought, regardless of agency, in accordance with this priority system. We have been given to understand that a high priority has been assigned to the Wolfe property, and that as soon as the Town shall have obtained a clear title to the property, the State will initiate procedures to make monies so that the Dept. of Fish & Game can reimburse Wendell and take title to it.

The Conservation Commission has secured grant monies to fund a study of our acquifers by Tim Limbers, a grad. student in Geology at U.Mass/Amherst. Currently he is gathering information on wells. He needs to know what kind of mantle (soil & rock) was drilled through, how deep the drilling went, or the digging went, and how much water it will provide. If anyone has relevant information, or plans to dig or drill a well, please advise the Conservation Commission and we will pass it on to Tim Limbers. Finally, we trust that any property-owner encountering Tim on his field investigations will understand the importance of the job he is doing.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles Thompson Smith

Jackie Ricketts Cont' from front page

bundle up Sarah and give me the latest snow plowing situation and the events of the previous 24 hours...all the shile insisting I come in for coffee.

She worried if the bus was late or the plow did not come or if the road boss was sick or if there might be a problem with the sander. She knew all the road bosses and Selectmen...she was never intimidated by any and had something to say if she felt something needed saying. She stood fast on principle and she let you know it. 'On the table" she would say and "go get em"! The "em" in those days were big government-dirty deals and fakes...she was form.. you were with her or you were not and she could tell you in a minute the reasons to be with her. If she failed to convince you she teased you and never gave up trying to change your mind.

Tough as nails with cascading affection for babies--hers and everybody elses--she became the surrogate mother for many Wendell children. She was a monitor of the community --especially West Road. Often a strange car (one or two cars a day travelled West Road. in those days) would be reported to me--even before it drove by my house. She kept track and knew the tenor of our town. If you put on airs or were travelling "in a spaceship" as she described it, she just walked a wide circle and would let it be. She worried about snowmobiles, school budgets, taxes and roads...just like all of us then...and now. She worried people would stop caring for the town...and, she suspected long before most of us, that a new Wendell was on its way. She was vigilant with issues and she was wise in her predictions.

Over the years the children flew nests and coffee breaks became fewer and fewer between.. .but she was always there..by the ever-present telephone, the front door yard after supper, and of course, in this Town Hall The vote, the process of the not-too-delicate debate gave Jackie a thrill it seemed. This Town Hall in the early seventies with new paint, new-but fragile-voting booths, and a sometime heating system were major happenings--accomplishments for the Town in a world gone crazy. For Jackie, it was making things "right" and "fair" and yes, "proper" that made sense. The common woman now in an uncommon town. The fight, struggle, lost or gained was better than no fight at all..and so it went. She moved right along with the complex worldwide issues Wendell began to deal with...muclear, civil defense, recycling, pesticides, and she took a stand ...every time, it seemed to me on the side of reasonableness and right and proper--but only if it was "good" for the Town. Jackie held on to her base--her way of looking at issues--and gave everybody the benefit of the doubt...once. And then..."go get em" she would laugh and her front line "troops" --friends, neighbors were alerted. That way, she said, the "issue gets put on the table". She was smart. At heart an organizer and a leader. She needed us and we needed her...to push, to spark interest and to see the issue talked out. Jackie came back to the Town Hall over and over again. Her view of the Town was that local people were local government and they needed to be monitored...and she never let that monitoring get boring. Jackie knew how to do it. Town-government-people, they were all connected...and this Hall was the testing of those connections.

Jackie made it "mandatory" for her neighbors to participate,to "show up"..even if you didn't want to. No town official escaped scrutiny. Scrutiny honed by a youth spent in the heart of Boston and perfected by a belief that less is more, and in a small town it was possible to make a difference. Plus some intuitive feelings she had about integrity..what a combination!

The station wagon pulls up--we unload the food, spread good things around. Cars come back from Millers and slowly people start to file into the Hall in small silent knots. It is hard to say anything. This is her place, her chair, her joking around. Now, her children grown and sure, and her out-of-family come into the small (by some standards) country Town Hall on a hot July afternoon. Their Jackie...the rural one...the country woman.

We have a connection with Jackie here today. Wendellites gather in the Hall after the food has been served and lean, sit and lounge as we munch on deviled eggs and very good chicken. Talk about the town issues: land, schools, taxes and with each person a sense of earnestness, wanting to "know" how to find information to "put things on the table". One man, I have seen but never talked with says to the : "I never knew others felt as I do." A woman pleads with the group to come to the meetings. Another woman says "Lets go!!...let's get back into town stuff..it's time!" She remembers the exact date of the last time she attended a meeting. Jackie has a connection here. She might laugh now and say "Go get em!" Connections just happening between some Wendell folks...Theres a feeling that we can and will and must be involved again. We have to be, "We will," we say--"we will"..and the connection continues.

It is cool now. Plates, paper, food have disappeared along with the people. There were no speeches here, just people joined together by a connection as old and as new as time. A connection of place, of times and of bood and not so good memories, all bunched together in your throat. There is a spirit here--you feel it. WE will miss her wave, her predictions and fiesty good humor. We will miss a good neighbor.

Emma Cappelluzzo

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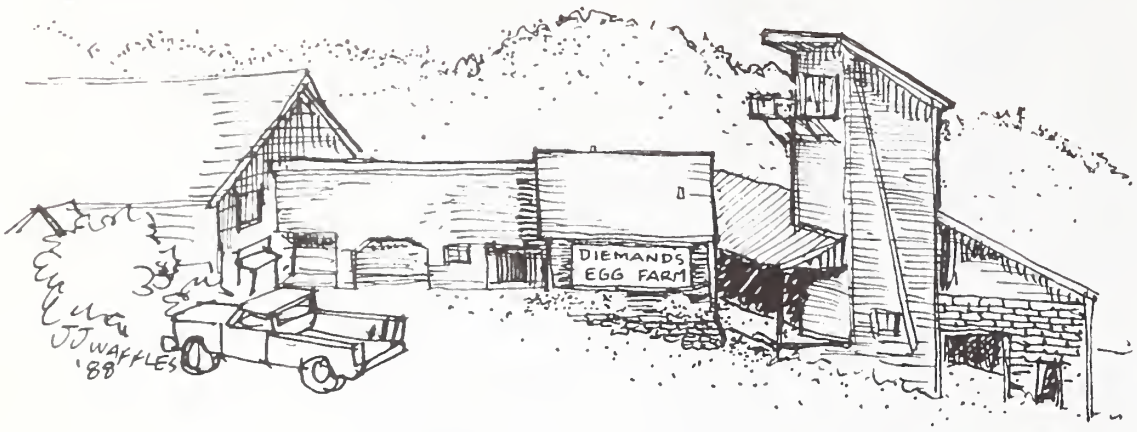
Farm Animals Cont' from front page



"Our cages 12" x 18" x 18", and we keep three birds in each cage. There's food and water in front of them at all times. The air is kept clean, and the birds healthy. We get them as day-old chicks, and are raised on the floor, in lots of 3,000. There are some farms in the state where they're on wire all their life.

"If the regulations came down that we had to have only two birds per cage, and if there were some way we could get a little more for the product, it might be OK. There's a certain amount of customer loyalty to brown eggs. But if prices get too high, we're going to lose them. If we had to go back to floor birds, there's no way we could stay in business. We'd have to collect eggs three times a day, and we'd need three times the building space.

"Some of the literature put out by the animal rights groups really bothered me. They are responsible for misinformation being passed around. They said with caged birds, that their nails grow so long and curl right around the wire. I'd be sick to my stomach if I didn't know this wasn't true. I'm kind of surprised they didn't say you have to cut them off at the knees to get them out!"

One flier from CEASE claimed the food given is comprised of recycled poultry manure and unsaleable parts of slaughtered chickens. "We feed our chickens grain," said Peter--"No Manure."

"One woman come right out and said she didn't feel (animal) agriculture had a place within the State of Massachusetts. Some of my best friends are vegetarians, and we joke with each other. It's like anything: if you infringe on my free choice, I don't feel it's right"

"There's an expection about how cheap food should be that has dictated how things are today. People go to the store and look for the perfect thing to buy, and they want it cheap. Maybe the grower has to use a chemical. The same person doesn't understand why pesticides are used to produce their food."

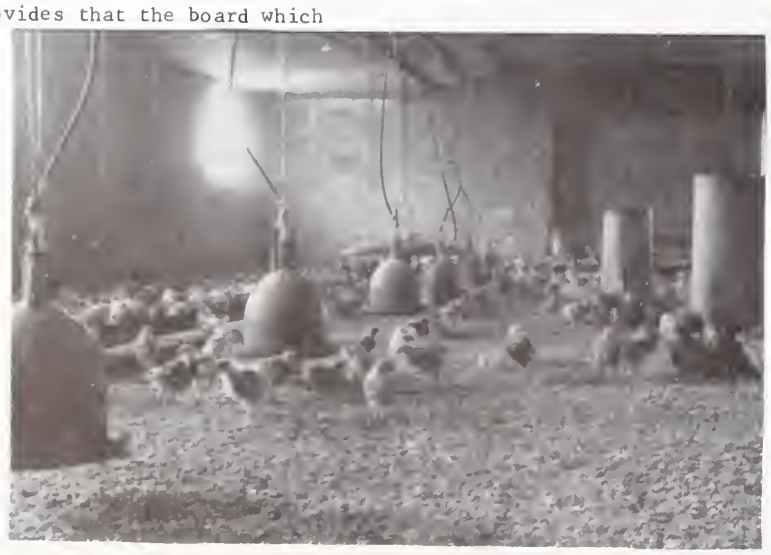
The bill provides that the board which will recommend the regulations will be composed of the Director of Animal Health or Animal Science and four veterinarians, chosen from a list nominated by groups like CEASE. "It doesn't include any farmers, to give the farmer's point of view," complained one local farmer.

To try to wrap the issue up, protecting animals' rights is a good thing, and preserving good local farmers and Massachusetts agriculture is vital for many reasons. The choice as presented is difficult to make. It should be pointed out that the bill attempts to ease the impact of the animal rights issue on Massachusetts farmers by permitting the Commissioner to turn down the recommendations of the board. It also provides for an exemption permit for a period of up to 18 months--renewable under some situations--if a regulation would leave Massachusetts agriculture non-competitive with out-of-state sources. There are also provisions in the bill for grants or loans to ease the burden of chages required. But the legislature must appropriate this money (in the past this has never been done for private business), and it could at most total only $570,000 for all of Massachusetts farms

So the bill tries, at least, to balance interests. To my eyes it didn't seem to reflect the rabid stance of some of its promoters.

But the possibility of hurting the Diemand Egg Farm haunts anyone who knows this wonderful family and their good eggs and knows, as I do, their spunky, healthy chickens. It may be worthwhile to support local, Massachusetts agriculture, even if the food costs more, and even if legislators have to be lobbied. That way we Massachusetts citizens can take comfort in knowing money arguments won't stand in the way of preserving our smaller, cherished farms and instituting more sensitive and humane agricultural practices that might spread across the entire country.

Jonathan von Ranson



Small chicks at Diemand Egg Farm

President Dukakis ?!

The feel of the evening news has changed with a native son nominated for President of the U.S. Michael Dukakis wasn't really a favorite son around here a few months ago, as showed by the vote tallies during the primary election. He was beaten in Wendell, as I remember, by Jesse Jackson, who seems to understand a fundamental imbalance both in our cities (between blacks and whites) and in the world (between the Western nations and the Third World).

But now that the Duke has been nominated, there's a stirring of the political juices that arouses feelings of pride, of "I know that man," and sentiments like, "As a national leader he's attractive because he's more decent and honest than some, and he's energetic and smart."

Wendell voters remember the Gov. Dukakis who stood at the Orange railway crossing in 1983 and announced his selection of the South Bank alternative for Route 2, an act which lacked much justification, as events later showed. (His administration finally acknowledged that the route was illegal, given the alternative available). But in the course of that long "jobs-vs.-environment" fight, when the measure was taken of the governor and the man, his trust in his transportation officials and in the process they chose resulted in some good government. Time consuming, to be sure, and therefore expensive for both the state and the private citizens who took up the burden, but finally fair. I think everyone who met with him, audited his appearances, and hounded him in the bear suit will agree that he trusted us too.

If the Duke, as President, were to apply the same techniques to solving the problem of offshore drilling, say, or whether to scrap NASA, it might produce good, solid, sensitively taken decisions. Of course you wonder if the federal government, with its staggering fiscal deficit, and the much bigger social and environmental ones it mirrors, can afford such ponderous committee work? Honestly, I am torn.

I wish, though, that he'd snap awake from the American Dream, in this case a pre-nightmare sort of obsession with conquoring mountains peaks of national prosperity...before they crumble, I guess.

Maybe it's just a campaign ploy. But Michael Dukakis' old-timey competitive economic vision for the United States may stand in the way of his being a great world figure. In these times the planet is whispering in our ear it doesn't have that much to give. Every now and then the whisper rises to a shout. Under these conditions some relinquishment by the "haves" is better economics than the Dukakis prescription: earplugs and government-business partnership. "We'll increase the competitiveness of the U.S. in the world trade. And we've got to give the homeless, hungry, economically disadvantaged the tools to compete."

The old dream of harmless prosperity is exploded fantasy. But does the Duke notice? He's issuing mountain-climbing equipment. He'll worry about avalanches later, I guess.

That's a definite perplexity. But as a whole I'm cheered by his presence on the Presidential campaign trail, and sent him a small contribution of money with a few thoughts to mull over, feeling like a very small PAC.

Jonathan von Ranson

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Some Salmon Make It!

Of the 50 real salmon who climbed the Turners Falls fish ladder dam this spring only 2 or 3 made it as far as White River Junction. Likewise, three of the 25 or so salmon, canoers and kyackers of the Salmon Revival Run of Earth First! made their destination of White River Junction on July 4th.

The five-and-a-half-week trip from Old Saybrook, Conn. upstream was the culmination of a plan to bring the plight of the Atlantic salmon and the whole river into the public's awareness. The flotilla received fairly good news coverage along the way, though the problem of rendez-vous with reporters was difficult as "river time" did not always mesh with "civil time."

The "salmon" say they were really caught up in the spell of the river and its appearance of wilderness. They sometimes had predetermined camping spots, but most they found at the end of a day's paddle... uninhabited islands in the river, a farmer's field high on the bank, a seldom-used park accessable only by boat. The paddlers made excursions into towns along the way, wearing their attention-getting fish hats, for beer and ice cream and a little river-talk with the locals.

Part-time salmon, Jonathan von Ranson, wrote "we saw good signs and bad on our trip up the river. Well, really chain of lakes. Freeflowing water is scarce on the river above Enfield, Conn. Since the flow is controlled by the call for electric power at a dozen dams, the bottom gathers slimy sediment, the water heats up, letting the dissolved oxygen free. These drastic physical changes together with a load of exotic pollutants leave the river ecology to adapt as best it can. Much of the inflow of pollutants has been removed, but bad ones persist in the silt. We declined to eat the fish."

Twenty-five people at different times joined the core group of 3 paddlers, Jamie Sayen, Barry Auskern and Tom Carney. And after the scheduled end at White River Junction, Jamie said, "I'm not stopping-I'm going right to the source (the Fourth Conn. Lake near the Canadian boarder)." Jamie was last seen paddling north, fishhead nodding in the morning sunrise.

Susan DunLany

Baseball Revisited

The reason I ask you; is because Cooperstown, New York, makes a great mini vacation! The Baseball Hall of Fame makes its home there because baseball had its roots at Doubleday Field in the late 1800's. The Hall houses 3 floors of exhibits, movies, etc. and of course an on-going playing of Abbot and Costello's "Who's On First" routine. The admission fees are reasonable - $5.00/adults, $2.00/kids to 15, for all day. We spent a good deal of time there in the afternoon, then returned in the evening when it was nearly vacant...My son was in his element! It opens 9 to 9. The ride is a leisure 5 hours.

Cooperstown village is a delight also. I had no idea. I was only going there to treat my son to the Hall of Fame, but it is situated on beautiful Otsego Lake. The lake is rich with history as well, such as; Council Rock. The Rock was the meeting place of 10 Indian Nations. They gathered there to try to establish peace amongst themselves; the first "United Nations". The Lake derives its name from that event - Otsego means "meeting place". Boat tours are available on the lake. It is a glacial formed lake and has a limestone bottom which keeps it very clear, and itl length of 10 miles is softly surrounded by rolling hills and a few cottages.

Of course the town has its usual amount of tourist baseball shops and restaurants, but it is not overbearing, but rather interesting. One seems to step back in time in the 1950 styled Short Stop Diner or cross the speed of light in the MoonDance shop. Cooperstown seems to have a little bit of everything, not only baseball!

When I was having breakfast at the Diner, I casually visited with the gentleman next to me at the counter, and at one point asked him if he knew today's weather. He tried to remember what he had watched on TV, then said, "We just take it as it comes around Here. We have 3 months of summer and 9 months of winter." We laughed... It was a gorgeous day with adventure-filled clouds to watch over the lake.

p.s. Truly, I'm not on the tourist board. I just wanted to share with you a taste of this adventure. Clare Green

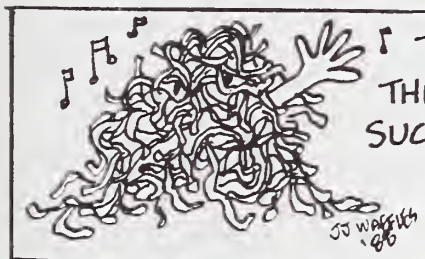
Tribute to Otsego

As if graced by a distant past
the Indians of old
cherished by all
greet us in the clouds.

A silent tribute - the rock
remains echoing the perseverence for peace
Be near us oh silent ones
and honor our hearts
as we persevere for
peace...Umane..Ho..

Annual Town Meeting in June

After Town Meeting



THANKS TO ALL THE FOLKS WHO MADE THE SPAGHETTI DINNER AND GROUP SING SUCH A SUCCESS. NEXT DINNER AND SING ON THANKS GIVING OR SOONER!!!

What's right with this picture?

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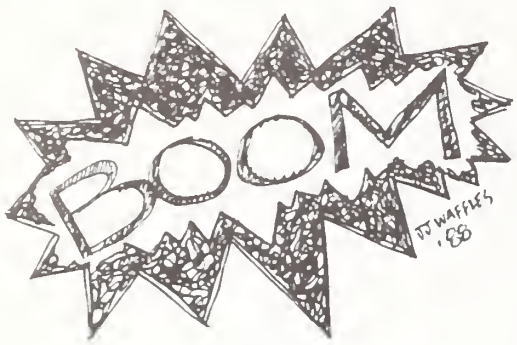


Down With Fireworks

AGAINST PRIVATE FIREWORKS
Message from the Spoilsport on Morse Village Rd. or why I support the laws against private fireworks

Weather has always made farming an unpredictable business, but when complicated by human inconsideration it becomes nearly impossible. The events that have taken place in our neighborhood during the first two weeks in July will explain our problem.

June 30: Neighbors to the west shooting off fireworks. Horse and ponies stampeding around pasture. Dogs throwing themselves against gate to their pen. Goats stand frozen in their tracks, staring at the source of the noise. We ask neighbors to stop and after two more whistling firecrackers peace is restored.

July 4: Neighbors to the east sending off fireworks. Since we have to work in the morning we choose to go to bed and hope the animals will be O.K. Dogs break down five foot gate to their pen. One, terrified, comes straight to the house. We call the neighbor and the fireworks stop. We chase the other dog for an hour then bring her in. Within an hour of catching the dog, a skunk has killed three of our chickens so we repair the fence and put the dogs back out to serve their duty as preditor deterrent.

July 9: Fireworks to the south. We watch the horse and ponies charging around the pasture and the dog throwing himself against the reinforced gate. This time we don't know which neighbor to call but soon it stops and the animals settle down again.

Now each time we have a thunderstorm we watch our animals become terrified. We wonder which gate will be broken, which animals will escape, which ones will be killed. Considering the number of storms we have had in the past two weeks you can count how many nights sleep we have missed.

July 14: While working with the ponies in the pasture the girls find the remains of fireworks. This discovery helps to explain why the animals who were never bothered by thunderstorms in the past now stampede and crash through gates to get away. A direct hit is a much more frightening experience than distant rumbling and flashing. This understanding does not, however, help us cope with the terrified animals.

We expect to be faced with many more sleepless nights until the animals overcome their fears or we get rid of the animals. This rather gloomy prospect compounded by the serious lack of sleep during this time period may explain some of the anger expressed when on July 14 during a thunderstorm our neighbor to the west began sending fireworks our way again.

Sylvia Wetherby

Greenhouse Effect

Well, the warnings of the last 20 years are coming true.

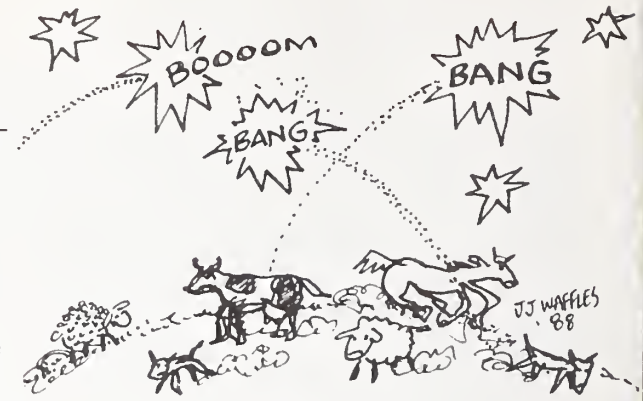
News articles in June reported the "greenhouse effect" for our planet has moved from theory to observed fact. The 30's-style drought and heat wave that was going on as the articles appeared apparently can't be blamed for sure on the greenhouse effect, but scientists with the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City agreed conditions like that--general warming (with icecap melting and crop disruptions), extreme temperatures, wild swings between wet and dry, stormy and calm--can be expected to increase. At least until this man-made trend is reversed.

A heavier bombardment of ultraviolet radiation from the sun has also lately been measured...this from a thinning of the ozone layer through reaction with chemicals "dumped" into the atmosphere in connection with certain manufacturing, cooling and insulating processes.

Several pollutants are behind the frightening greenhouse trend. One is carbon dioxide. Another is nitrous oxide. Both are products of fossil fuel combustion. The scientists who presented the recent findings to a Senate committee saw no viable technological fix; they urged less burning of fossil fuels.

If as an individual citizen you're taking the initiative and making any lifestyle changes or taking any political action, write to the Post and we will share your letter with our readers.

Jonathan von Ranson

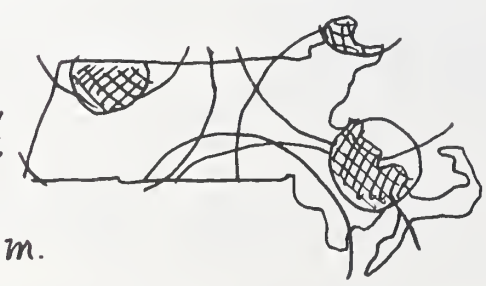


Solar Rollers

An anti-nuclear bicycling group originated 10 years ago in the hills of Western Mass. They travelled to Seabrook, NH in 1978, and have since cycled and canvassed their way to Rocky Flats, Colorado; Vernon, Vt.; Seneca Falls, NY; and Washington, DC discussing the twin perils of nuclear power and weapons with thousands of people along the way. This summer, the Solar Rollers will be leafletting, holding public meetings and press conferences to inform the public of the dangers of nuclear power and to educate people about the alternatives to Pilgrim and Powe. Grab a 10-speed and cycle with us for a safe energy future.

To sponsor this effort, mail a check to River Valley Voice and send to Solar Rollers, c/o River Valley Voice, P. O. Box 230 Turners Falls, MA 01376.

Speakers: Solar Rollers!!



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Where: Wheeler Memorial Library, Orange

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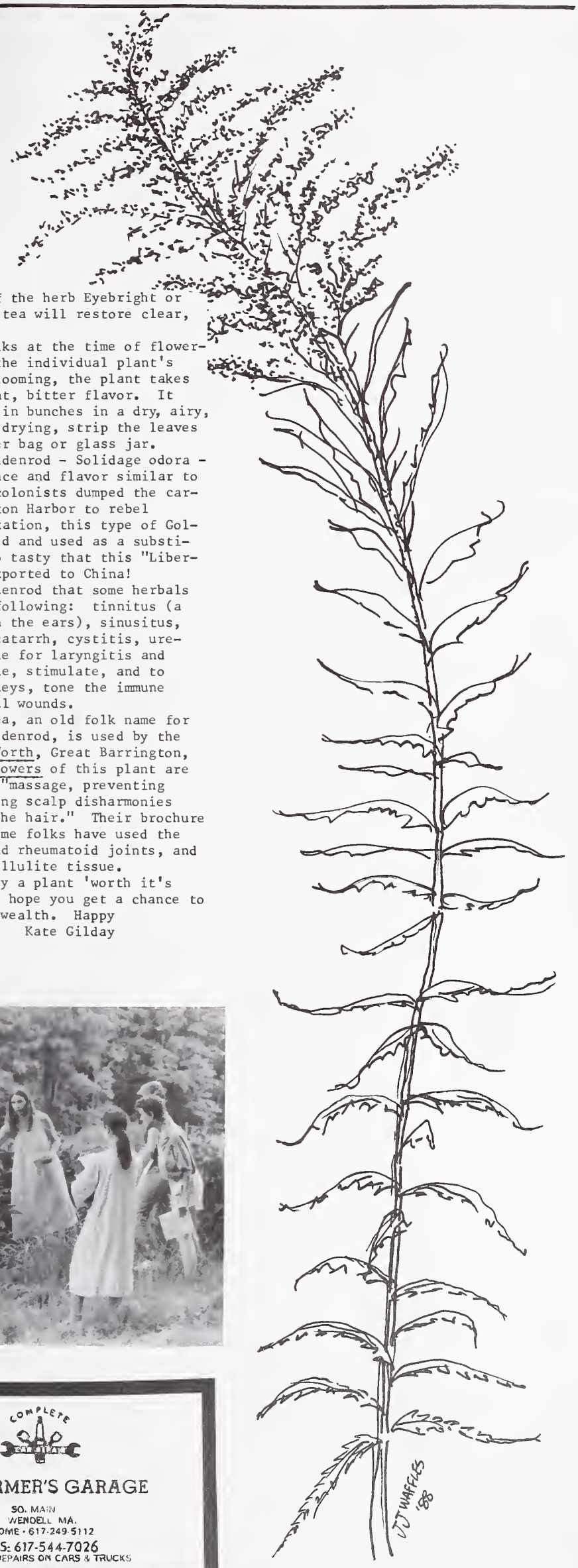
Goldenrod



Rods of gold filling fields, thickets, and roadsides, capturing and reaching for the sun, reminding us to enjoy and savor these last days of summer. More than 100 species of Goldenrod, Solidago spp., grow in North America. Three to six feet high, they are found on dry and sandy soils of eastern U.S. flowering from July to September. Their blooms grace many child-gathered bouquets that fill the house this time of year, filling tables and rooms with sunshine.

Some folks on entering our home and seeing vases full of goldenrod have been known to stare disbelieving, cover their noses and turn to rush out stating, "I get hay fever from those, I can't stay!" I usually rescue them before they get out the door and reassure them that they have been living with a false notion. Goldenrod's pollen is not airborne, but carried by bees and other insects, and therefore cannot be a cause of hay fever. However, Ragweed, (Ambrosia artemisiifolia), the real menace, blossoms at the same time - causing the all too familiar scratchy, puffy eyes, runny nose and blocked sinuses. Because it's flowers are inconspicuous it sneaks by unnoticed, while the showy rods of Goldenrod are mistaken for the culprit!

In fact, Goldenrod is used by many as a cure for the symptoms of hay fever. Drinking 1-2 cups of the tea each day, made by steeping 1 ounce of the dried leaves in a quart of boiled water in a closed container for 3 hours, will bring relief to the mucous membranes of the nose and sinuses. The plant is considered astringent, anti-catarrhal (eliminates or counteracts the formation of mucous), and anti-inflammatory. Nasal discharges will clear, imflammation will recede and one can regain normal breathing.

Using an eyewash of the herb Eyebright or Purple loosestrife tea will restore clear, soothed eyes.

Harvest the stalks at the time of flowering, but prior to the individual plant's flowering. Upon blooming, the plant takes on a more astringent, bitter flavor. It dries quickly hung in bunches in a dry, airy, warm space. After drying, strip the leaves and store in a paper bag or glass jar.

There is one Goldenrod - Solidage odora - that has a fragarance and flavor similar to anise. After the colonists dumped the cargo of tea into Boston Harbor to rebel against British taxation, this type of Goldenrod was harvested and used as a substitute. It proved so tasty that this "Liberty Tea" was even exported to China!

This is the Goldenrod that some herbals recommend for the following: tinnitus (a noise or ringing in the ears), sinusitus, upper respiratory catarrh, cystitis, urethritis, as a gargle for laryngitis and pharyngitis, to tone, stimulate, and to strengthen the kidneys, tone the immune system and help heal wounds.

Blue Mountain Tea, an old folk name for this particular Goldenrod, is used by the folks at Weeds of Worth, Great Barrington, Ma. The infused Flowers of this plant are used in an oil for "massage, preventing stretch marks, aiding scalp disharmonies and strengthening the hair." Their brochure also states that some folks have used the oil on arthritic and rheumatoid joints, and with a loofa for cellulite tissue.

This is certainly a plant 'worth it's weight in gold'. I hope you get a chance to try and enjoy it's wealth. Happy harvesting! Kate Gilday

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Wrong Year... cont'

tions: Who decided this? Why so much? Isn't there another way? Nobody at that meeting voted lightly or thoughtlessly. The questions were raised and the answers were pulled at every which way to see if they wouldn't come out differently. There was a sense that we had little reasonable choice other than to do what we did. We saw that a hard decision that nobody particularly liked had to be made, and for what was the good of the town, we made it. That, after all, is the job of Town Meeting, and did our job.

Now, people who were not at that meeting have turned our decision away, asking pretty the same questions we asked at Town Meeting only without getting the answers from people who had them the way we could. For the sake of those folks who weren't there, here are some of the reasons we did what we did.

Truth be told, Mahar is in a sorry state. Years of neglect have left their textbooks hopelessly outdated, eroded the base of their community support, and allowed the buildings themselves to deteriorate. Now, a new effort is under way to remedy the ills of the past, and frankly, the amount they're asking is small enough for what they're trying to do.

Mr. von Ranson suggests a number of alternatives. I went to school in New Hampshire--a state that numbers 49th in its spending for education--and I have heard all those arguments before. They sound good, but in the real world nothing is free: somebody has to pay for the materials to fix the roof, somebody has to do the fixing, and old textbooks don't update themselves. It all costs money, no matter how you look at it, and as somebody once said, "You get what you pay for".

I'm delighted that Mr. von Ranson is willing to help out with one child, but we are not talking about one child. We are talking about taxes, and that means we are talking about all the children and what is best for them. Old textbooks and leaky, unrepaired roofs tell our kids we don't care and that education really isn't that important; money can't solve every problem, but there are some problems that only money can solve. That's what taxes are for.

We realized all this, and we also realized that while community involvement is a necessity, realistically there are a number of things you can't expect it to handle. Day to day chores and new equipment and building projects among them. And those are precisely the things we're being asked to pay for. We're not talking about "purchasing the latest innovative solution"; we're talking about a collapsing roof.

should...start a program of graduated restraint", but I would urge that we do so after we have rebuilt a solid base once again For five or six years now, we have put off and put off and put off again as the Finance Committee worked to keep taxes under the cap and to some extent the jump we face is a direct result of that procrastination.

For Mahar in particular, the problems are longstanding and cumulative, and the new administration seems to be determined to bring the school back to life and accreditation in a reasonable period of time. This is a process that's going to cost something and we haven't seen the last of it, but it has to be done--if it isn't, we may as well write off the high school as a positive factor in our children's lives.

I, for one, don't want to do that.

But I will also say this: once the rebuilding process is under way and the basics are once again in place, I will join Mr. von Ranson in urging and working for a restrained program in all areas, and if we see a jump like this next year and another request for an override, I'll be writing a letter to urge you to vote NO.

michael j. mcphee

Making the Wendell Quilt. Left, Phyllis Lawrence; Mary Ellen Ziemba Davis, right, Marcelle Feltman.

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